

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Taylor Courter for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

**LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT HATE
CRIMES PREVENTION ACT OF 2009**

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud co-sponsor of H.R. 1913, the "Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009." According to FBI statistics, 118,000 hate crimes have been reported since 1991. During the same period of time, reported bias motivated crimes based on sexual orientation has more than tripled, yet the federal government currently has no jurisdiction to assist states and municipalities in dealing with even the most violent hate crimes against gay and lesbian Americans. The FBI's 2007 Uniform Crime Reports showed that reported violent crimes based on sexual orientation constituted approximately one out of six hate crimes committed in 2007, with 1,265 reported for the year.

The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 will provide assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies and amend federal law to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of violent, bias-motivated crimes. This important legislation is backed by a number of major law enforcement organizations, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National District Attorneys Association, and the National Sheriffs Association.

This bill will strengthen existing federal law by expanding its jurisdiction to provide protections for crimes directed at individuals because of their gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability. The bill only applies to bias-motivated violent crimes and does not impinge public speech or writing.

This bill includes an explicit First Amendment free speech protection. Pastors, Sunday school teachers, and religious leaders cannot be prosecuted for the content of their speech. Many religious groups have expressed support for the bill, including the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the Interfaith Alliance, the Presbyterian Church, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the United Methodist Church, and the Congress of National Black Churches.

I am proud to support the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 because it is grounded in fundamental American values: recognizing the dignity of every person, protecting religious freedom, and freedom of speech. This legislation protects people from violence based on who they are, and has explicit protections to ensure that the law does not punish what people think, feel, or believe, but rather actions that physically harm others. I urge passage of the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009.

**CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF
SERVICE BY THE BUFFALO AU-
DUBON SOCIETY**

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise to commend and congratulate the Buffalo Audubon Society on the occasion of their centennial of exemplary service to the communities of Western New York and New York State.

Established in 1909, the Buffalo Audubon Society is the oldest Audubon chapter in New York State and one of the four oldest Audubon Chapters in the United States serving the counties of Erie, Wyoming, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee and portions of Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegany.

This outstanding organization is a membership-based not-for-profit that provides an invaluable contribution to our community as it continues to promote the enjoyment and appreciation of the natural world through education and stewardship.

Its educational experience credentials remain exemplary as The Buffalo Audubon Society provides nature and environmental education to as many as 35,000 children and adults each year through classroom presentations, field trips, workshops, festivals, and excursions and has inspired a deeper appreciation of nature among hundreds of thousands of children and adults over the last century.

The Buffalo Audubon Society's stewardship is best exemplified by its ownership and maintenance of six nature preserves in Western New York, whose total acreage exceeds 1,000 acres, including Beaver Meadow Audubon Center, the most active nature education center in upstate New York.

The Buffalo Audubon Society is and will remain a leader in building partnerships and collaborations with other environmental nonprofits, state and local governments, and businesses throughout the region to affect positive changes in the natural environment of Western New York.

Tonight, the community will come together for a Centennial Gala at the Buffalo Zoo celebrating a century of nature education, environmental advocacy and accomplishments. I am pleased and proud to ask that my colleagues join with me in adding the congratulations of the United States House of Representatives and extending our deepest appreciation for 100 years of caring for the environment.

We also add best wishes to the Buffalo Audubon Society for every success in its next century of service as it continues its dedication to work as a strong and effective voice for the protection of natural wonders and environmental quality in Western New York.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO JACK
LEONHARDT, MAYOR OF THE
CITY OF WINDCREST**

HON. LAMAR SMITH

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, today I want to congratulate Mayor Jack

Leonhardt on the occasion of his retirement as Mayor of the City of Windcrest.

First elected Mayor of Windcrest on May 5, 2001, Mayor Leonhardt has been consecutively elected to four terms. He announced his retirement in May 2009. As Mayor, he served as Chairman of the Alamo Area Council of Governments, President of the Texas Municipal League Region 7, Treasurer of the Greater Bexar Council Council of Cities and was appointed by Mayor Phil Hardberger and Judge Nelson Wolff to the Transportation Task Force.

Mayor Leonhardt is a member of the Windcrest Lions Club, the Windcrest Optimist Club, the Northeast Partnership, the Greater Randolph Chamber of Commerce, and serves as an elder at John Calvin Presbyterian Church. He also served in the United States Air Force from 1966 until 1987 when he retired as Lieutenant Colonel.

He is married to Barbara and has two daughters, Jacqueline Denham and Joanne Brickson, as well as four grandchildren.

He has done an exceptional job as Mayor and we are all grateful for his service to his community.

ROBERT KNISELY

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Robert Knisely, a friend to all of Nebraska and a man whose philanthropy over the years—many times anonymous in nature—will be missed.

Born in Shubert, Nebraska, Bob served our country honorably during World War II, captaining B-17 and B-29 bombers in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

After the war, Bob founded Midwest Construction Company which became a nationally recognized heavy construction contractor for more than 56 years. He did not rest on his laurels, instead earning a reputation for a man who loved and lived his work. He returned this success to the State of Nebraska not only through private philanthropy, but also by working to make our State a better place.

Bob's strength was his ability to tap into the humor, empathy and charm which made him well-liked by everyone who knew him.

A driven man, a passionate Husker fan, and a loving husband, father and grandfather, Bob will be missed. My thoughts and prayers remain with his family.

**ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN
HERITAGE MONTH**

HON. DAVID WU

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Mr. WU. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, a time when we reflect on the contributions that Asian Pacific Americans have made to our country.

I would specifically like to take this opportunity today to speak briefly about the Asian